

My Bible --- Can I Depend Upon It?

By Bernard N. Schneider, Pastor, Washington, D. C.

There was a time when I seriously doubted the dependability of the Bible. Before I accepted the Lord Jesus as my personal Savior some 8 years ago; I used to read book after book acquainting myself with the "mistakes" of the Bible. After meeting with the Lord under the cross, I wanted sincerely to believe the whole Bible as the Word of God, but for a short time there remained with me some honest doubts about its dependability in every verse. The Lord soon opened my eyes, and through the few years of my life as a Christian the conviction that every word of the Bible is the true Word of God has grown stronger, until nothing in the world could shake it. This deep conviction is based upon both experience and knowledge. In this short article I want to give four good reasons why I trust in the Bible as the infallible Word of God.

1. I have complete confidence in the Bible because I have applied its teachings and promises to my own life and have found out that they are true, for they work. In submitting myself to the Lord as His Word tells us to do He has made me a new creature. I have prayed and my Lord has sent remarkable answers. These things are promises of the Bible, and when tried, they worked in my life. I realize that this reason is of a personal nature and does not convince others, but to me it is more convincing than anything else.

2. I have confidence in the Bible because I have observed that its teachings and promises work with others whenever applied. The following is just one example. Five years ago I was sent to Covington to organize a Brethren church. When we came here we found very little with which to accomplish such a task. In fact, it seemed impossible from a human standpoint, and most people here who knew of the intention seriously doubted its consummation. But we had the promises of God in His Word. He had given the command to go out into the world and preach the gospel. He had promised that when His Word was faithfully sown, it would bear fruit. We believed this promise. We acted upon it. God faithfully kept His promise, and as a result we have here now a thriving, self-supporting Brethren congregation. Why shouldn't we have confidence in the Bible as God's Word? He has never failed to make it good in our case.

3. I trust in my Bible because I see its prophecies fulfilled concerning Christ's first coming. Prophecy is what sets the Bible off to itself, towering above all other writings, sacred and otherwise, as the Writings of God. Most religions have their sacred writings, but none of them do accurately foretell the future except in such parts as have been borrowed from the Bible itself.

Anyone with a fair mind, making a close comparison between the O. T. prophecies concerning Christ's birth and death, and their fulfilment in the N. T., cannot help but see that the mind of man did not conceive the writings of the Bible. The foretellings are in no wise general, but exact details are given by the prophets, and fulfilled to the letter. For instance, Isaiah tells us that Christ is to be born of a virgin mother (Isa. 7:14 with Mt. 1:18-23). It must be remembered that this prophet wrote these words some 700 years before Christ was born. Micah tells us the birthplace of Christ over 700 years in advance (Mic. 5:2 with Mt. 2:3-6). David gives us the very minute details of Christ's suffering and death about 1000 years in advance. He tells of the piercing of the hands and feet (Psa. 22:16), of the parting of His garments and the casting of lots over His coat (Psa. 22:18 with Jn. 19:23-24). Even the little detail of having vinegar given Christ to drink was foretold by the Psalmist (Psa. 69:21 with Jn. 19:28-29). And these are only a few convincing samples of this fruitful field of study.

Right here I want to beg the reader's pardon for mentioning another personal experience. Before I was a Christian, I knew about these prophecies. But I had many doubts as to their originality. Even after I became a Christian, secret doubts would steal into my heart concerning these things. How was I to know for certain that these foretellings had really been written long before they were fulfilled? But one day, soon after being saved, I had a great experience which helped me much in exchanging certainty for honest doubts. I was hunting in an encyclopedia for some detail concerning ancient history. Suddenly I stopped. I was reading that among other noteworthy deeds of a certain ancient ruler who lived a few hundred years before Christ came to earth, was the fact that he had ordered a group of educated men to translate the O. T. Bible from the Hebrew language to the Greek language of his country. I read this for the second time. It was something worth while to me, especially since it was found in a worldly encyclopedia of facts. Of course, all this is well known to ministers and Bible students, but to my young Christian life it meant a great deal. If the O. T. was already translated from one language into another 200 years before Christ came to earth, then those prophecies concerning His first coming are a wonderful proof of the trustworthiness of the Bible for they were literally fulfilled. No mere human could make such accurate predictions concerning a certain person centuries in advance.

4. I trust my Bible because its ancient prophecies concerning this present time are being fulfilled be-

fore our eyes today in such a wonderful manner that it ought to convince even the most sceptical. One can sometimes take a front page of one of our daily newspapers, and a page from the Bible, and laying them side by side be tempted to think that the same editor had dictated the contents of both, so plainly are the events of today the fulfilment of the foretellings of God's Word.

The history of the Jews has always been an excellent commentary on the Bible. But today their plight speaks louder than ever confirming the words of our Lord: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled" (Mt. 5:18). Who can read the graphic description of their dismal existence among the nations of the world in this age as foretold in Deut. 29, and then read about their inhuman treatment in many parts of the world today without an apparent cause or human explanation, and not be convinced that the Bible is trustworthy?

We read concerning the Jewish people: "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other" (no prophecy was ever more literally fulfilled) "and among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest" (Deut. 29:64-65). Think of the Jews being shoved about in the world today. Unwanted, but present everywhere! A few years ago they were fleeing from Germany to Austria for safety. But there their rest was short lived as Hitler soon took that over. Czecho-Slovakia seemed to be a safe haven, and many tried to enter that country. But, alas, Hitler soon swept that nation into his "Lebensraum," and many thousands of Jews tried to escape. Even the poverty of Poland seemed better for a time than the Nazi concentration camp. And now Poland has its Nazi concentration camps. Today there are several million Jews homeless and moneyless in Central Europe, wondering what will be happening to them next. Recently we read of hundreds who died while being shipped in cattle cars back and forth between Berlin and Warsaw in zero weather. Thousands have taken refuge on ships, sailing the seven seas, hoping that some nation will act human and let their feet touch solid earth again. "No rest for the sole of thy foot" says the sacred record. How literally true.

"But the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and thou shalt have none assurance of thy life" (Deut. 29:65-66). Who can read these words, which are only a small sample of the great store of prophecy concerning the Jews, and not be convinced that not man but God is the author of the Bible, when we see them being fulfilled so accurately. The evidence is too convincing, and is the more convincing the closer it is examined. Furthermore this same Bible tells us that the Jews will suffer these things among the nations until a certain time when they shall be regathered to their own land for the last drama of their already colorful life story. There they must yet endure the time of

"Jacob's trouble" before they will fulfill the purpose of their calling, and receive their King and kingdom. Again, the events of our day bear out the accuracy of God's Word, and slowly the children of Israel are stealing home to Palestine.

To all these evidences we could add many others. There is for instance the unnatural friendship of Russia and Germany, so plainly foretold in the Bible. But, what further evidence do we need? Let us praise the Lord that He has given us His Word, and let us heed its goodly instructions to us, for: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16).

FOUR KINDS OF CHURCH MEMBERS

Those who are saved and know it.

Those who are saved and do not know it.

Those who are not saved but think they are.

Those who are not saved and do not care.

P.S.—My Classification is